



Impressions

History from a First Grade Point of View

The stage was set for learning and fun in January at Northside Elementary in Ann Arbor. The first grade was studying local history and invited the Museum on Main Street to visit their school with a few artifacts and stories. The school's 72 first grade students visited four stations where they could handle a manual typewriter, dial telephone, calculator,



cabinet radio, cameras, stereograph viewer with cards, a view master, high top shoes, pictures and hats.

When asked what they used in school to work with the answers were "pencil, paper and ipad". I held up a small slate with a piece of white chalk and they said "that looks like an ipad!" From that moment on, "way back when" did not seem so far away.

The students had been learning how families sat around the radio and listened together. We turned the radio on, which was as thrilling as turning the dials to find the music. Their curiosity about how things worked was enthusiastic and contagious. The typewriter, cameras, stereograph and viewmaster were all huge hits. The questions were interesting and it was great to hear them say "I've seen this in my grandmother's house"

After exploring the stations, they came back to the stage steps and were asked if several of the exhibited items could be put into a single box. The students' vigorous response was "Oh no, they won't fit!" I asked the students if they would fit into the envelope I was holding. "Oh no!!" they shouted. I then removed my cell phone from the envelope, and

almost immediately the students realized that the bulky items of yesteryear have evolved into a single device that we use today. They got it. The function of those artifacts still have a purpose.

This is why the work of collecting, preserving and sharing the history of our community matters for future generations to come. Your membership and support makes this possible.

Bev Willis

Inside...

Features

- 4 Spring Sunday Programs
- 5 Rev. H.P. Jacobs, MD

Highlights

- 2 Message from the President
- 3 Collections
- 8-9 The Argus Corner
- 10 The History of American Historical Societies
- 11 Membership Renewal
- 12 Exhibits on Main Street

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Impressions

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A Message from the President **James Davis**

We've all had the experience of reading about the odious actions of people a century or more ago and being repulsed by the people who perpetrated those actions. Such revolution is natural and healthy. Even so, in evaluating people's actions we should guard against two somewhat contradictory tendencies.



On the the one hand, we should guard against "presentism," a term coined to indicate the tendency to evaluate people's actions in the past by today's knowledge and values. In examining people's actions, we should ask ourselves if they had the knowledge, values, and opportunities to have "known better" and to have acted differently. After all, how would we feel if society became vegetarian in a century and our descendants detested us for being carnivores? Even if people in the past behaved in odious ways, we should try to "walk in their shoes" for a while. Such walks help us to understand people and empathize with them. They also help us wonder whether our ways and our values will seem bizarre or even abhorrent to people in the future.

On the other hand, we should not engage uncritically in relativism, the belief that one value or way is as good and moral as any other value or way.

Relativists claim there is no valid way to distinguish

between what is moral and what is immoral, especially as they pertain to the past. Many people suffer under the tyranny of relativism and believe they have no right to evaluate the actions of others for fear of seeming to be elitist, narrow-minded, or bigoted. They willingly bend to prevailing cultural and political breezes. They believe there are no universal and timeless truths or values. This position is undercut by the fact, for example, that all societies throughout history have condemned wanton killing of others, killing that is done for absolutely no purpose. Similarly, people of good will in virtually all societies have sought to treat others fairly, humanely, and justly.

If we are aware of the dangers of presentism and the dangers of relativism, we are able to understand and evaluate the actions of people in the past in ways that we would want our actions to be evaluated.

Washtenaw County Historical Society

P.O. Box 3336 • Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

734-662-9092 wchs-500@ameritech.net

Museum on Main Street

500 N. Main St • Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1027
(at the corner of Beakes & E. Kingsley)

HOURS Saturday & Sunday, 12 Noon – 4:00 PM
and by appointment Monday-Friday
Groups are welcome, Call 734-662-9092

Exhibits:

History Unlocked (closes March 20)

Cake (opens April 9)



WashtenawHistory.org



Collections: Recent Additions

The WCHS collects artifacts that relate to the history and culture of Washtenaw County. If you have artifacts to donate, send an e-mail to judychr@aol.com or call Judy Chrisman at 734-662-9092.

1. Booklet - "Where to Go", Ann Arbor, Michigan, Nov. 1919; Program – May Festival, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Hill Auditorium, May 19-22, 1920; Brochure--Goodrich Steamship Lines, lists tours and schedules, 1930; Ticket stub--University of Michigan vs. Minnesota football game, Oct. 22, 1949; Attendance Card--Sunday School, "Peter Crans" in ink on reverse – from Martha Churchill
2. Saw--one man saw, extra handle attached for use as two man saw; Buck Saw; 2 Hand drills; Mold--for single 50 caliber bullet; Mold--for single 5/8" round lead shot— from Dana Paluk
3. 3 Ann Arbor High School yearbooks--Omega--1938, 1941, 1944; Bookmark--Easter Greetings; Mass card--Rev. Bro. Eucarius, F.S.C.; Calling card--Fred A. Gee; 2 cards--horse description and breeding information; Memorial article, newspaper clipping, biography--Herbert Youtie, U.M. Professor, 1905-1980—from Sydney Sivers
4. 6 Pen and ink drawings: 4 by Paul Kreutziger--University of Michigan Law Quad; Cobblestone Farm; Kempf House; University of Michigan President's home: 2 by J. LaRocca '81--Concord Bridge, New Hampshire; Virginia barn—from Marilyn Bigelow
5. 3 Photographs--Carte-de-visite of woman, by studio of S.T. Speechley, Ann Arbor, Aug. 1872; Cabinet card of young woman, by studio of J.J. Gibson, Ann Arbor; Cabinet card of young man, by studio of J. J. Gibson, Ann Arbor, inscribed "William Charles Hollis, Born Sept. 2, 1867— from Jim and Ellenmary Kane.

6. 4 Teacher Certificates issued by the Office of Board of School Examiners, Washtenaw County to Mae Howard Sept. 1906, Oct. 1907, Aug. 1909 and Aug. 1910; Blueprints of home of Rev. Henry Bank, 4 Packard St., Ann Arbor, MI; Pencil drawing of front facade and partial side facade of Rev. Bank's home—from Dexter Area Museum
7. Catalogue--Ann Arbor Machine Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan, makers of hay presses/balers—from The History Museum, South Bend, IN
8. Photograph--Senior Class, Ann Arbor High School, 1909--Nellie Emma Huebner Norris, grandmother of donor is in photo, by Lyndon, Photographer; Copy of photo of Nellie Emma Huebner Norris and her two sisters, Mary Huebner Wahr and Elizabeth (Wilhelmina) Huebner; Copy of photo of Rose Hintz Huebner Stemple, mother of the three sisters—from Duane Parker
9. Candy box--Preketes Chocolates, Ann Arbor; Announcement--Invitation to commencement week of Univ. of Mich. Literary Department, June 24-28, 1917; Bulletin--"Of Sea and Sail", exhibition from Hubert S. Smith Collection, University of Michigan Clements Library—from Northville Historical Society

10. Dress--black silk and lace, beaded, c1920s; Coat--black velvet—from Linda Walker
11. Collection of 11 pin buttons pertaining to Washtenaw County—from Susan Wineberg



12. 15 postcards; Autograph book--Charlie McCauley, 18th birthday; Journal--1834, Samuel A. Morgan; Collection of family letters and documents such as tax receipts, business receipts, bank book, insurance policies and receipts; Family Bible--Samuel A. Morgan; 2 mourning cards--Aurora Morgan, d. 1890; Samuel A. Morgan, d. 1875; Story of Samuel Alanson Morgan, 1810-1875 written by Darold F. McCalla in 2011; Copy of pedigree chart of Darold F. McCalla—from Darold McCalla
13. Yarn winder, handmade, sturdy, for hands-on use—from Richard & Helen Gardner

Some of these items are on display at the current exhibit at the Museum on Main Street. We thank everyone who donated these artifacts for the preservation of local history.



Family, Fun, Food and Fellowship – Jim Smith III

By Dale Leslie

Longtime co-owner of Washtenaw Dairy Jim Smith passed away on January 26, 2016. Jim Smith III was envied due to his overt actions and conversation that showed he loved each day of his life. Jim shared an ultimate personal pride, with his partner Doug Raab, in the operation of the family business, Washtenaw Dairy, known as "America @ the Corner." Jim generated over-the-top customer service to the many lives he touched in commercial business and in private life. The Dairy's reputation is the best donuts in town and the most enlightening conversation, over coffee, by the senior citizen Morning Crew. His employees are "family" and many



people began their working career behind the counter at the Dairy.

He was a long-time supporter and member of the Old West Side organization. Jim was proud of his hometown and collected memorabilia to display on the walls of the Dairy.

It appears he possessed the largest and most diverse collection of historic baseball-softball gloves which are mounted at the crack of the bat each Spring. Recently, Jim and his loving wife Candace, set an example in perseverance and courage in battling his terminal cancer. "Family, Fun, Food and Fellowship" - Jim Smith III was the standard bearer. He is already missed.

Save these Dates for Sunday Afternoon Educational Programs!

WCHS members will receive postcards or emails with program details in early March.

For more information call 734 662-9092 or email wchs-500@ameritech.net.

Sunday, March 20
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**History J. L. Hudson
Department Store**

PRESENTED by Michael Hauser

Dexter District Library
3255 Alpine Street, Dexter

Sunday, April 17
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**Cobblestone Farm
Museum & Barn**

*TOUR by George Taylor,
Jane Carr, and Kevin Gilson*

**Understandings of the
American Frontier**

TALK by James Davis

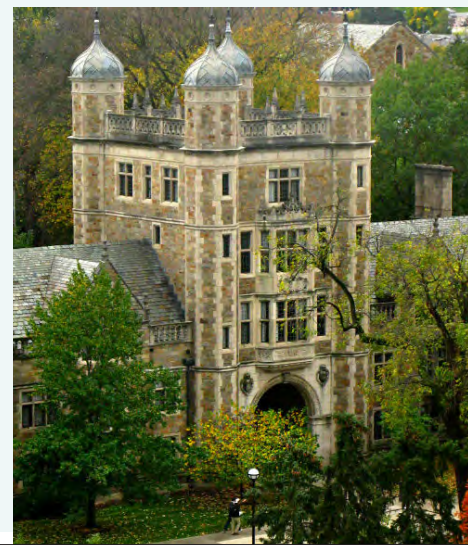
Cobblestone Farm and Museum
2781 Packard Road, Ann Arbor

Sunday, May 15
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**UM Law Quad
History Tour & Talk**

PRESENTED by Margaret Leary

Law Quad, University of Michigan
625 S State Street, Ann Arbor



HP Jacobs Ypsilanti's Builder of African-American Worlds

By Matt Siegfried



REV. H. P. JACOBS, M.D.

Ypsilanti's large and historic African-American community, which dates to before the Civil War, has given much to the region and to the country. Elijah McCoy's achievements have rightly been praised by his home town, and he is easily the most famous African-American from the city. However, there was another man living here around the same time that had an impact felt across the country and is most certainly the most important African-American, and perhaps the most historically important person, black or white, to ever call Ypsilanti home.

Henry P. Jacobs was born Samuel Hawkins on July 8, 1825, and with the rest of his family was held in bondage by the wealthy planter Dill near Ashville, Alabama. His family had moved with the Dills from South Carolina to St. Clair County, Alabama when he was a child. Settling near the Coosa River in the foothills of the Appalachians, the Dills would own over thirty human beings, making them among the wealthiest of their class in the county.

The young Samuel was said to be too small to work in the fields and was charged with aiding an elderly, and invalid, member of the family. It was from this man that Samuel learned how to read and write while enslaved. That education would have a profound impact, both personally and on the world around him.

By around thirty years of age, Samuel had married a woman named Louisa and had a number of small children. He must have planned his escape meticulously, perhaps thinking about it for years. He forged 'free papers' for his wife, their three children and two of his brothers, took his master's horse and buggy and left for Canada on July 24th, 1856. Twice they were stopped and their papers examined, but they arrived safely on the Detroit River on August 19th of that year, just over three weeks and 750 miles later.

On the 20th of October 1856 Hawkins shed his slave name and took the name, along with his brothers, of Jacobs. Henry P, later known almost exclusively as H. P. Jacobs was baptized in the Detroit River by the Reverend William Troy. Troy was minister to Canada's refugees and author of *Hair-breadth Escapes from Slavery to Freedom*. Like Jacobs, he had escaped from bondage and also like Jacobs, would return South after the war.

Thousands of blacks had found refuge in Canada, many escaping from slavery and others escaping from racism in the North, in the years before the Civil War. Many of them would later settle in Ypsilanti and other towns in the environs of the Detroit River. A strong relationship between Michigan blacks and communities of color in Canada is evident in many of the stories and documents from this time. It is possible that the Jacobs family travelled through Ypsilanti on their way to Canada.

It is in Ypsilanti where we next find the family living with the black barber Norris Arnold, in the years prior to the Civil War.

Jacobs found work here as a janitor at the Michigan Normal School, now Eastern Michigan University. This would prove to be a fortuitous decision in the lives of his daughters and granddaughter. Jacobs would enroll his daughters in the Music School attached to the college. They would go on to become accomplished musicians and teachers themselves.

Jacobs was ordained a Baptist preacher on September 18, 1858, and quickly became a leader of Ypsilanti's black community. Within a few years he had helped to found and was first pastor of Ypsilanti's historic Second Baptist Church. The congregation of the Second Baptist Church met at several locations in town including the Presbyterian Church on Pearson Street, a private home on Babbit, the Adams Street School and in a building on Michigan Avenue between Normal and Ballard Streets.

Said not to "stoop to the whims and petty prejudices in order to gain popularity", H. P. Jacobs would become one of the most prominent black Baptist ministers in the country in the years that followed the Civil War.

Jacobs was among the hosts of an historic 1863 meeting of Michigan's African-American men in Ypsilanti, which included leading black figures of the day. This historic appeal for civil rights came even before black people were considered citizens of the country and one hundred years before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led the March on Washington in the summer of 1963.

Jacobs also founded a school for African-American children in Ypsilanti.

(Continued next page 6)

Henry P. Jacobs – Ypsilanti’s Builder of African American Worlds, continued



Ypsilanti’s segregated Adams Street School, 1900s. Used today as church, it is next to Brown Chapel, the second oldest African Methodist Episcopal Church in the state of Michigan. (Ypsilanti Historical Society)

Originally, black youth could go to Ypsilanti schools but were required to sit in the back of the classrooms. Tired of this daily humiliation, Jacobs led black families in removing their children from school and demanding black teachers under conditions where their children would be treated with respect. The first teacher was black and the school hosted Michigan’s first black school principal.

It seems wherever Jacobs went, he built a school. Immediately after the Civil War he returned south with his family where he helped to establish a seminary and day and night school to teach those newly freed from their shackles to read and write in Natchez, Mississippi. Jacobs, declared, “we find in the face of all that heathenish teaching, that slavery is dead; and as such we all ought to be engaged in building up the old waste places.”



To achieve this end, Jacob and other black Baptists acquired an old Marine hospital that would serve as a seminary to educate young ministers and to train black teachers. After much deliberation, trial and setbacks, their labor pro-

duced Natchez Seminary in Natchez, Mississippi. The school opened its doors on October 23, 1877, almost eight years after Jacobs and his colleagues had proposed the development of a school to serve black youth. The school which Jacobs founded and where he and his family taught is now known as Jackson State University, one of the most historic and respected places of higher learning for African-Americans in the country.

Within ten years, Jacobs had gone from being enslaved to a janitor here at the Normal School (which is now Eastern Michigan University) in Ypsilanti, to the founder of the Natchez Seminary, and his activity had barely begun.

His eldest daughters, just in their early teens also taught with him. His connections to his children, Anna, Samuel (who died in Ypsilanti in the 1870s), Mary, Elizabeth and Julia, would remain strong. As an illustration: at least two of his daughters, Anna and Mary would continue to use their maiden name Jacobs in their last names after marriage, almost unique for the time.

Another factor keeping the family close was the early death of Anna’s mother, Louisa in Natchez. As a result, Anna would take in her younger siblings and raise them as they returned to Ypsilanti.

Jacobs’ eldest daughter Anna married Ypsilanti African-American barber Robert De Hazen, who had a shop at the Follett House in Depot Town and then moved to the second floor corner of Hewitt Hall, (where the Mix now is) for decades. The building once had a third floor containing a hall that hosted many events of importance to Ypsilanti’s black community, including multiple speeches by the great African-American freedom fighter and orator Frederick Douglass.

DeHazen, or “Al” as he was known, was a leading member of Ypsilanti’s vibrant African-American community. As a barber and business owner, DeHazen’s work which often made him a mediator between the white and black communities, even after barbering became entirely segregated, Al would hold the respect of many white Ypsilantians. Al hosted masquerade and holiday balls for the black community and was a leading member of many African-American fraternal organizations.

The house of Robert DeHazen and Anna Jacobs-DeHazen, which still stands on South Adams, was the African-American household closest to Ypsilanti’s downtown, and the dividing line between black and white Ypsilanti. Al DeHazen’s house, quite literally, stood where he stood in the city socially. This home is still standing and would have seen many visits of Jacobs as he returned to visit his family, preach or engage in political activity. Living there occasionally were also Anna’s sisters Julia and Mary, and the De Hazen’s only surviving child, Allie. After Anna died in 1895, Robert married Amanda Roper in 1897, his wife’s young music student. Al died in 1901.

(Continued on page 7)



The De Hazen-Jacobs home, 111 South Adams as it is today.

Henry P. Jacobs, continued

Their daughter, H. P. Jacobs' granddaughter, Allie, would live to old age, the wife of a doctor and music teacher herself in Washington, Pennsylvania.

Henry P. Jacobs became one of the most important men in Mississippi in the Reconstruction years. In addition to helping found what would become Jackson State University he was elected to the Constitutional Convention that drafted Mississippi's post-war Constitution and then elected to the State's senate three times in short order as well as serving on the Natchez City Council. He led one of two powerful Reconstruction-era factions of black politics; the other led by John R. Lynch, in Mississippi and became a leading black voice in Southern politics.

As African-Americans emerged from bondage, they founded hundreds of churches and societies; they married freely and planned futures for the first time. A whole world was being created out of the ashes of slavery and the war in those years and Jacobs was at the center of that creation. He organized beneficent societies and freedmen to pool their money and purchase the plantations they formerly labored on as worker-owners.

He served as President of the Missionary Baptist Convention of Mississippi for seven years. He was constantly travelling around the state setting up congregations as part of his work.

H.P. kept in close contact with his friends and relatives in Ypsilanti; local newspapers printed his inaugural speech to the Mississippi senate and in later years he would travel to Michigan to speak at the Emancipation Day celebrations or other events. Indeed, Jacobs is easily the most mentioned local Black man in the local press of the 19th century, and yet remains almost entirely unknown today.

Breaking with the Baptist Convention in later years, Jacobs would continue to grow and learn. He studied medicine though no school would enroll him and practiced without a license for 20 years. On May 3, 1890, at the age of 65, he was given his doctorate in medicine from Louisville National Medical College in Kentucky.

As a physician, in what was then his old age, he travelled to the newly forming black communities of Kansas and Oklahoma to serve as doctor, healer, educator, pastor, and leader.

This remarkable man and his family, from slave to janitor to state senator in ten years, were able to achieve what they achieved because of the climate that that rose from the Civil War in the period of Reconstruction.

Those same advances would be closed down in just a few short years as a counter-revolution of Jim Crow swept aside the gains paid for by blood in the Civil War. It must have been terrible for Jacobs to see and live through this defeat.

Institutions founded by Jacobs still dot the landscape, from Second Baptist Church in Ypsilanti to Jackson State University. However, his legacy remains largely forgotten, a casualty of the defeats suffered in the years of Jim Crow. The memory and legacy of H. P. Jacobs and his family. This man who travelled the country, and yet constantly returned to his home in Ypsilanti, helped to remake America after the Civil War and lived a life of inspiring service.

His memory is a challenge to us to live up to the ideals which sought a "second birth of freedom" for the country 150 years ago this year. How many others who work in drudgery, who clean the floors of our schools, could be leading them instead? That is the challenge of HP Jacobs. We can begin rising to that challenge by remembering him.

As part of the Ypsilanti African-American Mural Project, local high school students recently completed a mural in honor of H.P. Jacobs on the side of historic Currie's Barbershop at 432 Harriet Street.

Email Matt at msiegfr@gmail.com with questions or for more information.

MEET THE AUTHOR Matt Siegfried was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio and landed in Michigan in the 1990s. He has lived in Ypsilanti since 2001 and is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University with degrees in History and Historic Preservation. Much of his work has been on Ypsilanti's local history and its connections to broad historical moments. He has focused on Ypsilanti's rich Native American and African-American history, producing a website southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com which details the development of Ypsilanti's Black community. Matt believes that the landscape and built environment we walk through every day is alive with worlds of history and can speak to us about why we live the way we live today.



The Argus Corner - News and Views Through Our Lens

By Cheryl Chidester



The crowd begins to gather on Saturday morning

First of all, we thank everyone who helped to make the 2015 Argus Collectors Group (ACG) Ann Arbor Fall Conference a success. Attendees hailed from across the country and Canada. While several were returning guests, for others, this was their first ACG Ann Arbor conference. Each participant brought something special to the conference adding to the depth of knowledge, interests and enthusiasm among attendees.

The conference kick-off has traditionally coincided with a photography exhibit opening. This year's show, *Alchemy*, organized by Deborah Kingery, was presented by "Renegades with an Argus Group" (RWAG) and "Renegades with Alternative Processes" (RWAP). The artists' hard work, creativity and talent, were appreciated by our guests.

Presentations are a significant aspect of the conference, and this year's presentations were impressive. Dick DeMara (Bay City, Michigan) showed his slides of the construction of the Mackinac Bridge taken with his Argus C3 camera (which he then donated to the Argus Museum), Wesley Furr (Bridgewater, Virginia) presented his project of converting

an Argus 75 into a digital camera. Photographers, Jessica Burton (Highland Park, Michigan) and Mary Buchanan (Ann Arbor) talked about their work. Mike Reitsma and Pam Buckley (Burlingame, California), drove across county with their significant aviation equipment collection, Argus Plant I in WWII; it took days to set up their conference display. The presentation of their findings was very informative and held the audience's interest. The collection is currently in the Argus Museum storage.

We plan to collaborate with other institutions to display the collection so that this intriguing story can be shared.



Dick DeMara

Local community support is vital to the success of the conference. Several establishments either donated auction items, offered discounts or free admission or accommodated conference attendees in other ways. These included Hollanders, Camera Mall, Michigan Firehouse Museum, Ypsilanti Automobile Heritage Museum, Argus Farm Stop, Jefferson Market and Cakery, Haab's Restaurant, A-1 Rental, Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Michigan Photographic Historical Society and our own Museum on Main Street.

Additionally, auction items were donated by ACG members. Of course, the event would not be possible without the work of dedicated volunteers. The Argus Museum's intern, Claire Milldrum (Ypsilanti Michigan), Rose Majeran (Ann Arbor) and Phyllis Tirador (Marion Township, Michigan) who are conference-volunteer-repeats and Alan Symons (Ann Arbor), whose father worked for Argus, helped to make the event run smoothly. Bob Kelly (Renton, Washington), again served as MC and assistant organizer. Sandy Martens (Racine, Wisconsin) and Pam Smith (Minden, Ontario) supplied Friday's dinner to all the guests. Wesley Furr recorded the presentations. (DVDs will be available. Contact Cheryl Chidester, Argus Museum curator, if you're interested in receiving a copy.) Adrian Wyle (Ann Arbor) photo-documented

the WWII Aviation Collection.

I relied on these volunteers to get to all the "things" that I couldn't and help with dealing with the impossibility of being in two (or three) places at the same time.

(Continued on page 9)

Argus Corner, continued

The conference received “rave reviews” from participants. However, we believe that the conference was successful in other ways as well. We were introduced to “new” former Argus employees and their family members. A little-known chapter of Argus history – aviation equipment contributions in WWII was brought to light. Donations, many of which are unique or rare, joined the Argus Museum’s collections. The conference generated a greater awareness, and support, of the museum. Area artists gained exposure. A number of oral histories were conducted during the conference. Connections and conversations among ACG members, WCHS members, historians, artists and the local community generated good will and collaborative ideas.

We are looking forward to 2016 projects. We have begun to earnestly tackle the daunting task of accessioning and cataloging the Henry J. Gambino Argus and Vokar Collection and hope to have a small portion of the collection on display in the near future.

By loaning some of our artifacts to institutions, we hope to increase awareness of Argus’s significant contributions to the Arsenal of Democracy of WWII.

We will be collaborating with the Ann Arbor District Library to expand the collection of recorded oral histories of former Argus employees.



From the aviation equipment collection, Argus Plant I in WWII

The line-up of this year’s photography exhibitions is developing into an exceptional one. We are looking forward to working with the artists and the hosting the exhibition openings which are enjoyed, and appreciated, by those who attend. The exhibitions and opening dates will be announced and posted. All are welcome to join us.

We are also discussing other collaborative events with local photography organizations and businesses.

Of course, our biggest yearly event is the conference which is tentatively scheduled for October 13-16, 2016. Mark your calendars and watch for posts!



Conference participants Mike Reitsma, Stu Shurster, Bob Kelly and Frank Moelich



Argus cameras from the Gambino collection

WE TELL AN INTERESTING STORY...

While our calendar is filling up, we would like to extend an invitation to organizations to enjoy the Argus Museum’s space and collections. The museum hosts tours and meetings. Additionally, presentations can be given on-site or off-site.

The Argus Museum, located on the second floor of 525 West William, Ann Arbor, features products manufactured by the Argus camera company and tells the stories of the company, the people involved and showcases unique collections connected to Argus. The museum is housed in the Argus I Building, which was one of the facilities where Argus products were manufactured. It is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM .

History Online!

Any digital device (laptop, computer, tablet, smart phone) is your passport to exploring the past.

We Choose the Moon

An interactive recreation of the Apollo 11 mission to the moon. The site is divided into 11 stages containing animation, archival photos, videos, and mission audio that bring the launch to life.
wechoosethemoon.org

Have Fun with History

This website is filled with American history stories, images, videos, activities, links and resources – Check it out because history is fun!
havefunwithhistory.com

The Package Museum

Take a walk down memory lane with many images (and 3D images of some of the products) of American package design from the early decades of the 20th century. You can search by product name.
packagemuseum.com

Eyewitness Exhibits

Another great, interactive research page is a site called *Eyewitness Exhibits*. These are very personal, historic photos that present famous events and eras throughout history in a very human way. The photos will show you candid and sometimes extremely emotional images that you just don't find in the history books.
archives.gov/exhibits/eyewitness

Seeking Michigan

The Seeking Michigan website is the online platform for the Michigan Historical Center. It includes Archives of Michigan research guides and indexes, a blog, photographs and educator resources – all from the Michigan Historical Center and Archives of Michigan staff.
seekingmichigan.org

The History of American Historical Societies

By Sara Lawrence

Concerned citizens during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century formed the earliest historical societies in the United States. While European countries had many excellent libraries and were beginning to form historical societies during the eighteenth century, the libraries of the United States were relatively small, and there were few places to deposit important documents and manuscripts pertaining to the history of the developing nation. Recognizing that valuable materials were becoming lost or ruined, private benefactors donated collections and money to budding organizations designed to collect and preserve items that would help future generations understand their American heritage. One of the primary activities of early societies, also seen as a preservation activity, included reprinting manuscripts for wider dissemination.

These earliest societies set the standard for the historical organizations that emerged during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1850s, nearly all the states east of the Mississippi had organized historical societies; local historical societies were flourishing, and pioneer organizations were popping up in the West.

The founders, members, and officers of these societies were typically educated men of the professional classes, as they were the ones with the leisure and authority to take up such ventures.

Despite their interest in scholarship, these men were largely amateurs by today's standards and frequently collected materials that served primarily to memorialize famous men or to record their locality's

or organization's role in a specific conception of national progress and destiny.

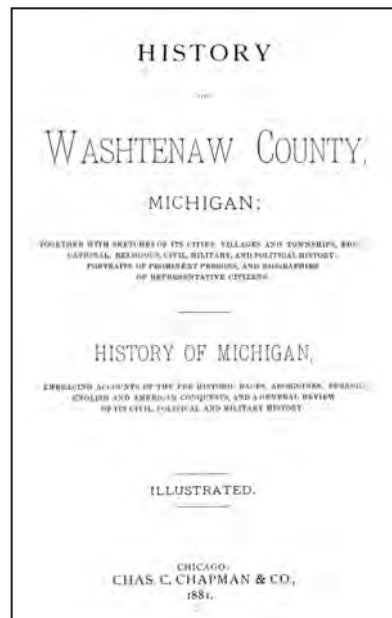
While societies became increasingly more democratic in their membership policies, large groups of people continued to be excluded or underrepresented in the activities, products, and scholarship sponsored by historical societies. For example, as the discipline of history became professionalized in the United States in the 1880s, many prominent historical societies added professional historians to their staff and began publishing journals geared toward academics. However, the new professional standard favored national history over local history, and increasingly this standard overshadowed the work of amateurs who continued to preserve local history materials in less-esteemed historical societies.

It was not until the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s) that historical societies came to be seen as institutions with a capacity or obligation to serve the public. During this time of unsettling rapid change, citizens increasingly placed a premium on public education as a means for social uplift. Progressive Era reformers stressed the ability of education to perfect mankind. Some historical societies shifted their objectives and began to embrace this new

form of social responsibility.

The museums of these historical societies changed from their former state of being mere "cabinet of curiosities" to including exhibits that engaged and educated the public. Additionally, more historical societies developed relationships with schools and sponsored commemorative centennials and pageants.

(Continued on page 11)



History of American Historical Societies, continued

The public's interest in the activities of local historical societies increased significantly during the twentieth century. A number of factors influenced this trend. At the turn of the century the public became increasingly concerned about preserving the history of cities that were undergoing architectural and demographic changes. The vast cultural changes brought on by immigration prompted some groups to preserve the history of communities' founding families.

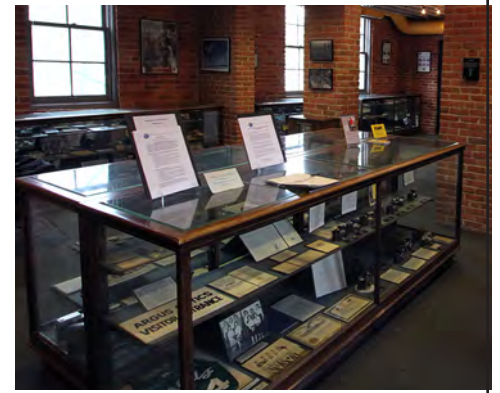
The increasing affluence of American society after World War II meant Americans had more leisure time to dedicate toward an interest in history. The advent, and later the affordability, of the automobile enabled historic shrines and sites to become popular destinations. Additionally, the postwar urban renewal of the 1950s caused many to become concerned for the preservation of historic architecture that was slowly disappearing.

The founding of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) in 1940 reflected this growing appreciation of local history. In 1958, the AASLH transcribed the debates from the discussion panels at their fourteenth annual convention and printed them as the book, *Ideas in Conflict*. In the Preface of the book, Director Clifford Lord of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin pointed to "a growing conviction...that the historical society was only partly fulfilling its function in the modern era if it continued only to serve higher scholarship, whether academic or lay."

When the academic historians abandoned local history, he explained, a chasm grew between the public and their history. Local historical societies were luckily bridging this chasm, he claimed.

Although local history was gaining acceptance, by mid-century the collections of both privately-funded

WCHS Membership – Does a lot of Good



We count on your annual memberships and donations to support the work of The Society and the two museums we operate: The Museum on Main Street and the Argus Museum. Membership runs the calendar year.

Membership Dues Support

- Care for the collections
- Educational programs
- Community outreach and county collaborations

Membership Benefits

- Quarterly issues of *Impressions*
- Six or more educational programs
- Opportunities to volunteer and network with history lovers
- Discounts at the Gift Shop

3 Ways to Join or Renew

- 1. BY MAIL:** Current members will receive renewal letters with return envelopes in early December.
- 2. ONLINE:** You can renew or join at washtenawhistory.org
- 3. IN PERSON:** The Museum is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 Noon - 4pm when there is an exhibit. We hope that you have been pleased enough with the quality of our exhibits, programs and work that you continue to belong. washtenawhistory.org

Thank You for being a Friend of Local History

and publicly-funded historical societies were still largely centered on the accomplishments of the majority population. By the late sixties, however, the history of previously neglected groups, such as women, working class families, immigrants and ethnic minorities, gained more attention.

The transition within historical societies was aided in part by an oversupply of academically trained historians in the seventies. As university jobs became scarce, professional historians flooded the societies.

In recent years, advocates within local historical societies in particular have become increasingly vocal about the benefits of interpreting history in a way that reflects the perspectives of the locality. Historical societies increasingly see themselves as facilitators who are helping various communities within the city tell their stories." A strong relationship with the local community is essential to this equation.

This article was written by Sara Lawrence (Masters in Social History) for the Public History Resource Center.

The Center provides a forum for research, scholarship, networking, and education in public history and seeks to broaden and deepen the general public's awareness of the field of public history in all its diversity and complexity.



Unlock Local History at the Museum on Main Street

All of the county's cities and many of the townships and villages have formed community-based historical organizations to remember, preserve and celebrate their individual heritage and make it accessible to the public in educational and entertaining formats.

"History Unlocked" is the current exhibit at the Museum on Main Street in Ann Arbor. Members of the Washtenaw County Historical Consortium offer a key insight into their own history and examples of how that heritage is interpreted today through their museums, historical homes, sites, programs and attractions. We hope that a story in this exhibit unlocks your curiosity about local history and the organizations who collect and preserve it. Exhibit closes March 20.



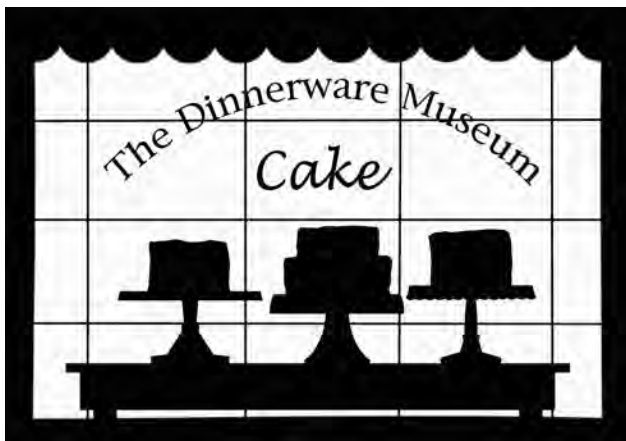
You will see a wagon wheel, farm tools and Native American tools and arrowheads from the Pittsfield Township Historical Society

These historical organizations have displays in "History Unlocked"

- African American Cultural & Historical Museum of Washtenaw County
- Argus Museum
- Chelsea Area Historical Society
- Cobblestone Farm
- Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum
- Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County
- Kempf House Museum
- Manchester Area Historical Society
- Museum on Main Street
- Pittsfield Township Historical Society
- Salem Area Historical Society
- Saline Area Historical Society
- Washtenaw County Historical Society

The exhibit is open Saturdays and Sundays, 12:00 Noon to 4:00 PM and by appointment. For information or to make an appointment to see this fun and family-friendly exhibit, call 734-662-9092 or email wchs-500@ameritech.net. Groups are welcome.

Cake – Opens April 9, 2016 on Main Street



The Dinnerware Museum is the only museum in the world devoted to the subject of dinnerware, international in scope, no material limitations, including functional ware, ancient to futuristic, and fine art referencing dinnerware.

A story about Robranna Goat Farm in Saline is scheduled for a forthcoming issue. Notice anything about the name?



An invitational and juried exhibition of cake stands and cake sculpture created by contemporary artists, as well as vintage cake stands, all displayed amidst sweet and delicious details about the history of cake.

Exhibition dates: April 9 - September 4, 2016
at the Museum on Main Street